AUM

Nay! but once more
Take My last word, My utmost meaning have!
Precious thou art to Me; right well beloved!
Listen! I tell thee for thy comfort this.
Give Me thy heart! adore Me! serve Me! cling
In faith and love and reverence to Me!
So shalt thou come to Me! I promise true,
For thou art sweet to Me!
And let go those
Rites and writ duties! Fly to me alone!
Make Me thy single refuge! I will free
Thy soul from all its sins! Be of good cheer!

—*Bhagavad-Gita, ch.* 18.

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The Bhagavad-Gita.

(*Continued from May number.*)

We have seen that Devotion must be attained by that student who desires to reach enlightment. This is what is meant by Krishna's reply to Arjuna, at the conclusion of the second chapter.

"When he has put away all desires which enter the heart, and is satisfied by the Self in himself, he is then said to be confirmed in spiritual knowledge."

It is not possible to be wholly given up to the dictates of the Spirit while any desires that come into the heart are permitted to engross the attention.

Of course the person described here is one who has gone much higher in development than most of us have been able to. But we ought to set up a high ideal at which to aim, for a low one gives a lower result at the expense of the same effort. We should not put before us an aim less than

the highest merely because it seems that our success will not be as great as we think it ought to be. It is not so much the clearly perceived outward result that counts, as the motive, effort, and aim, for judgment is not passed upon us among the things of sense where human time exists, but in that larger sphere of being where time ceases, and where we are confronted by what *we are* and not by what we have done. That which we have done touches us only in mortal life among the delusions of material existence; but the motives with which we live our lives go to make up our greater being, our larger life, our truer self. Do actions we must, for no mortal can live without performing actions; those bring us back to earth for many weary incarnations, perhaps to final failure, unless the lesson is learned that they must be done with the right motive and the true aim. That stage reached, they affect us no more, for, like Krishna, we become the perfect performers of all action. And in so far as we purify and elevate the motive and the aim, we become spiritually enlightened, reaching in time the power to see what should be done and what refrained from.

Many would-be occultists, as well as some theosophists, leave out of sight this chapter's teaching. Devotion has no charms for them; they leave it to those who would be good men, no matter what their creed or philosophy, and attention is paid to reading books, either new or old, upon magic, upon ceremonial, or any other of the manifold delusions. Nor is this erroneous practice newly risen. It was common among the alchemists, and the result in some cases is that students now waste valuable years in mastering ceremonial, Rosicrucianism, talismanic lore, and what not, as laid down in the books, while all of it is either useless mental lumber or positively dangerous.

I do not mean it to be understood that there never was real Rosicrucianism, or that ceremonial magic yields no results, or that there is no science of talismans. There are realities of which these, as now known, are shadows. But we might as well expect to find the soul by attentively studying the body, as to know the truths behind the influence of talismans or ceremonial magic by studying the books now extant upon those subjects. The mediæval so-called magicians have left a mass of writings that are now a delusion and a snare for students, theosophical and non-theosophical. In these are minute directions for various sorts of practices, but they are all the attempts of men to enable mortals, by methods altogether outward, to control the astral or natural world. Success did not come to these practitioners, nor will much else save failure be the portion of those of our own day who follow their directions. In most cases of the old European so-called sorcerers and writers on magic, their published lucubrations are only salves to disappointed vanity; in the rest, mere reduplications of formulæ left by their predecessors. Paracelsus positively declares that true magic is

within the man—a part of his inner nature, potential at first, active after development, and that ceremonies or formulæ are the veriest rubbish unless the person using them is himself a magician.

In the practice of ceremonial magic, where certain geometrical and other figures are to be used with the aid of prayers and invocations, there lies positive danger. This danger is increased if the student follows the practice for the sake of gain or glory or power or mere wonder seeking,—all of these being selfish. In this ceremonial the operator, or self-styled magus, surrounds himself with a circle or an arrangement of triangles, the use and purpose of which are to protect him from whatever sprites he may arouse. Mark that well! It is for *protection*. Protection of this sort would not be needed or thought of unless a fear lurked inside that the shades or demons had power to hurt. So at the outset, fear, the product of ignorance, is fully present. The next important thing to be noted is that a sword has to enter into the conjuration. This is advised because the demons are said to fear sharp steel. Now Jesus said that he who lived by the sword should perish by the sword. By this he meant just what we are talking about. Ceremonial magic involves at almost every step the use of a sword. After the invocator or magus has used the ceremonial, say with success, for some time, he at last creates within his aura, or what Swedenborg called his sphere, a duplicate of what he had previously used and pictured on the floor or walls. In this he is no longer master, for, it being placed in that part of his nature of which he is ignorant, the sword of metal becomes an astral sword with the handle held by the demons or influences he unwisely raised. They then attack him where no defence can be interposed—on the astral and mental planes, and, just as surely as the wise man's words were uttered, he at last perishes by the weapon he himself used. This danger, thus roughly outlined, is no mere figment of the brain. It is positive, actual, immanent in the practice. No book study will give a man the power to make the constitutional changes, as well as psychical alterations, needed before he is commander of immaterial forces. But these latter may be temporarily evoked and made acquainted with us by pursuing certain methods. That is the beginning. Their turn is sure to come, and, obeying a law of their nature, they take what has sometimes been called their "revenge." For all such practices call only upon the lower, unspiritual part of our nature, and that clothes such beings with corresponding attributes. Their "revenge" consists in bringing on inflammations in the moral character which will eventuate in a development of evil passions, atrophy of concentration, destruction of memory, ending at last in a miserable conclusion to life, an almost total failure to use the opportunities for progress presented by that incarnation. Therefore I said, it is all either useless mental lumber or positively dangerous.

In history and in our own experience there is abundant evidence that the Bhagavad-Gita is right in saying "spiritual knowledge includes every action without exception," and that it is to be attained by means of devotion. Ignorant men who had no access to books have by their inward sense perceived the real truth of things, not only those round about them, but relating to the larger concerns of nature. Jacob Boehme was wholly unlettered, but he knew the truth. His writings show an acquaintance, not to be then gained from books, with the true doctrines found in the Hindu scriptures and secret books. In Germany to-day are men known to me, who, more unlearned yet than Jacob Boehme was, know many things still mysteries for our learned theosophists who can boast of college education. The reason is that these men have attained to devotion, and thereby cleared away from before the eye of the soul the clouds of sense whose shadows obscure our view of truth. I do not decry or despise learning; it is a great possession; but if the learned man were also a devoted one in the sense of the Bhagavad-Gita, how much wider would be the sweep of his intellection no one could calculate.

Learning of the human sort is not despised among the highest occultists, even among the Adepts. They use it and acquire it. They accumulate *the record* of the experiences of seers and devoted men of small learning for long periods of time, until a great master of both learning and devotion arises who, by reason of his profound knowledge joined to devotion, can make the wonderful deductions in the possession of The Lodge respecting matters so far beyond us that they can with difficulty be imagined. But this again proves that devotion is the first and best, for these extraordinary Masters would not appear unless devotion had been the aim of their existence.

Without devotion a vast confusion arises within us that has been likened by some to a whirling motion, by others to the inrushing, overpowering flow of turbid waters. Boehme calls it in some aspects "The Turba." It is the delusion produced by the senses. And so Krishna, in closing the second lecture, says:

"Let a man, restraining all these, remain in devotion when at rest, and intent on me alone. For he whose senses are under his control possesses spiritual knowledge. Attachment to objects of sense arises in a man who meditates upon them; from attachment arises desire; from desire passion springs up; from passion comes bewilderment; from bewilderment, confusion of the memory; from confusion of the memory, destruction of the intellect; from destruction of the intellect he perishes.

But he who approaches the objects of sense with senses free from love and hate and beneath his own control, having his soul well-disposed, attains to tranquillity of thought. In this tranquillity there springs up in him a separation from all troubles. For the mind of him whose thoughts are tranquil soon becomes perfect in concentration."

A very beautiful portion of the Sanatsujatiya may be read with profit here.[1]

"Some say that freedom from death results from action; and others that death exists not. Hear me explain this, O King! have no misgivings about it.

"Both truths, O Kshatriya, have been current from the beginning. The wise maintain what is called delusion to be death. I verily call heedlessness death; and likewise I call freedom from heedlessness immortality. Through heedlessness verily were the demons vanquished; and through freedom from it the gods attained to the Brahman. Death, verily, does not devour living creatures like a tiger; for, indeed, his form is not to be perceived. Heedlessness develops in men as desire, and afterwards as wrath, and in the shape of delusion. And then traveling in devious paths, through egoism, one does not attain to union with the Self. Those who are deluded by it, and who remain under its influence, depart from this world and then again fall down into generation. Then the senses gather round them. And then they undergo death after death. Being attached to the fruit of action, on action presenting itself, they follow after it and do not cross beyond death. And the embodied self, in consequence of not understanding union with the real entity, proceeds on all hands with attachments to enjoyments. That, verily, is the great source of delusion to the senses: for, by contact with unreal entities, his migrations are rendered inevitable; because, having his inner self contaminated by contact with unreal entities, he devotes himself to objects of sense on all sides, pondering on them only. That pondering first confuses him, and soon afterwards desire and wrath attack him. These lead children to death. But sensible men cross beyond death by their good sense. He who, pondering on the Self, destroys the fugitive objects of sense, not even thinking of them through contempt for them, and who, being possessed of knowledge, destroys desires in this way, becomes, as it were, the death of Death itself, and swallows it up."

The second chapter ends with a declaration of what is the sort of death that results in union with the Divine, preventing absolutely any return to incarnations upon earth. It is found in the sentences:

"That man who, casting off all desires, acts without attachment to results, free from egotism and selfishness, attains to tranquillity. This is the condition of the Supreme Being, O Son of Prithá! Having obtained this, one is not troubled; and remaining in it, even at the time of death, he passes on to extinction (or union with) the Supreme Spirit."

Those are the last words of the second chapter.

Any other mental attitude at the time of passing away will surely cause us to acquire a mortal body again.

1 Sanatsujatiya, ch. 2.

Krishna's declaration brings up before us, not only the practices previously inculcated, but also the whole subject of death. For, in order to know how to "think of Him at the moment of death," or to have that tranquillity which only perfection of devotion confers, we must find out what death is, and whether it is solely what we see going on at the decease of a human being, or more than can be gauged with the eye. A little reflection shows that what is seen and noted by physicians and spectators is but the withdrawal of the soul and energy from the outer envelope called "body." While that is going on, the person may accept rites of the church or profess adherence to any sort of doctrine whatever, even with his last outward sigh speak of heaven with its bliss awaiting him. But that is only the first step. It leaves his visible features calm and happy, perhaps, in expression; his relatives close his eyes,—they call it death. He, however, has only begun to die. The soul has yet to pass through other envelopes beyond the ken of friends, beyond even the dying man's present control. All now depends upon the whole course and kind of thought in which he indulged during the life of the body. For the soul has to pass along the road by which it came, and that way is lined with the memories of a life-time; as these memories rise up they affect the departing entity, causing it to be either disturbed from concentration on the Supreme Being, or assisting to a greater perfection. If, then, some few years only near the close of life were devoted to the sort of practice inculcated by Krishna, the memories of the years previously spent in following after desires will throw a cloud over the soul and absolutely prevent it from attaining that state from which return to earth is impossible without our consent. It is more perfectly illustrated by considering life as a grand musical movement that is brought to a close by using at once all the tones sounded throughout the whole preceding portion. The result will be a combined sound, expressing neither the highest nor lowest notes, or the sweetest or less sweet, but the resultant of all. And this last sound is the fixed vibration that governs the entity, sounding all through him, and throwing him into the state to which it corresponds or of which it is the key. Thus it is easily seen that in each thought lie the possibilities of a harmony or a discord for life's conclusion.

"Guided by the clear light of the soul, we have considered thy teachings, O holy sage! They have been efficacious for the removal of the obscurities surrounding Ishwara's abiding place in us; we are delighted and refreshed; may thy words remain with us, and, as a spring refreshes the earth, may we be refreshed by them!"

WILLIAM BREHON, F. T. S.

THEOSOPHY IN TENNYSON'S "IDYLLS OF THE KING."

[A PAPER READ BEFORE THE MALDEN THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.]

IN TWO PARTS.

PART II.

While as a whole the poem may perhaps be best held to represent the struggle between the highest in a man and the lower elements of his self, yet it may also indicate the fate of a higher spirit come to earth to help humanity, and whose work is constantly marred and his plans thwarted by the opposition of enemies and the misunderstandings of friends, and who needs must stand alone, none even of those who love him best being able to rise to his level.

In the "Holy Grail" especially, we seem to see the sad results of undertaking to do another's work, a work for which one is not fitted. At a banquet of the knights in the great hall there suddenly appears a glorious light, breaking through the roof and flashing over them all; the light is so blinding that they cannot see what it is that makes it, but all know that it must be the Holy Grail. And each knight swears a solemn vow that he will ride a twelvemonth and a day, searching for it until he can clearly see it. The King is not with them at the time, but with some of his knights is away, ridding the country of a band of robbers that have been devastating it. On his return he is told of the event and of the vow, and is saddened at hearing it; and as Percivale tells the story:—

"Woe is me, my knights," he cried,
"Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow."
Bold was mine answer, "Had thyself been here,
My King, thou would'st have sworn." "Yea, yea," said he,
"Art thou so bold and hast not seen the Grail?"
"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light,
But since I did not see the Holy Thing,
I swore a vow to follow it till I saw."
Then when he asked us, knight by knight, if any
Had seen it, all their answers were as one;
"Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn our vows.'
"Lo now," said Arthur, "have ye seen a cloud?
What go ye into the wilderness to see?"
Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice
Shrilling along the halls to Arthur, call'd,
"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,

I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—
'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me.'"
"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the King, "for such
As thou art is the vision, not for these.
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign—
Holier is none, my Percivale, than she—
A sign to maim this Order which I made.
But ye, that follow but the leader's bill"
(Brother, the King was hard upon his knights)
"Taliessin is our fullest throat of song,
And one hath sung and all the dumb will sing.
Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne
Five knights at once, and every younger knight,
Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,
Till overborne by one, he learns—and ye,
What are ye? Galahads?—no, nor Percivales"
(For thus it pleased the King to range me close
After Sir Galahad); "nay," said he, "but men
With strength and will to right the wronged, of power
To lay the sudden heads of violence flat,
Knights that in twelve great battles splash'd and dyed
The strong White Horse in his own heathen blood—
But one hath seen, and all the blind will see.
Go, since your vows are sacred, being made:
Yet—for ye know the cries of all my realm
Pass thro' this hall—how often, O my knights,
Your places being vacant at my side,
This chance of noble deeds will come and go
Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering fires,
Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea most,
Return no more."

And indeed few return at the end of the year. Galahad, already fit for it, sees the Grail, and after riding far and in its strength fighting bravely for the right, is carried with it to the spiritual city, to return no more to earth. Percivale sees it only at a distance; he sets out on the quest, first glorying in his strength and sure of success, then at the thought of his sins overwhelmed with despair and feeling that this quest is not for him; and in this is the cause of his partial failure, for as the hermit tells him:—

What is this
Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy sins?
Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself
As Galahad."

But even this distant view makes him renounce his knightly career and spend the rest of his days in a convent.

Lancelot, great and noble soul, has yet in him a sin from which he cannot free himself; as he tells the king:—

"in me lived a sin
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,
Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung
Round that one sin, until the wholesome flower
And poisonous grew together, each as each,
Not to be pluck'd asunder."

When he makes his vow to seek the Grail, it is with the hope that it will help him to so pluck them asunder; through terrible trials and ordeals he reaches at last to where the Grail is; but the door is closed; madly breaking it open,

"thro' a strong glare, a heat
As from a seven-times heated furnace, I,
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,
With such a fierceness that I swoon'd away—
O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
All pall'd in crimson samite, and around
Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes,
And but for all my madness and my sin,
And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw
That which I saw; but what I saw was veil'd
And cover'd; and this Quest was not for me."

Sir Bors alone, good and true knight, has clearly seen the Grail, when, bound and imprisoned by the heathen, he is only thinking of dying like a brave man. All unexpectedly the vision is given him; he returns to his work as a true knight, but, though the glory of the vision is in his heart ever after, he cannot tell it to any one else. Only these four see it at all; the rest have followed vain phantoms, or have early given up the Quest; and only one in ten of those who took the vow returns at all. The closing lines of this Idyll, Arthur's words to the few returning knights, are but an amplification of Krishna's words to Arjuna;—

"Finally this is better that one do
His own task as he may, even though he fail,
Than take tasks not his own, though they seem good."

"And spake I not too truly, O my knights?
Was I too dark a prophet when I said
To those who went upon the Holy Quest,
That most of them would follow wandering fires,
Lost in the quagmire?—lost to me and gone,
And left me gazing at a barren board,
And a lean Order—scarce return'd a tithe—
And out of those to whom the vision came
My greatest hardly will believe he saw;
Another hath beheld it afar off,
And leaving human wrongs to right themselves,
Cares but to pass into the silent life.
And one hath had the vision face to face,
And now his chair desires him here in vain,
However they may crown him otherwhere."

"And some among you hold that, if the King
Had seen the sight, he would have sworn the vow:
Not easily, seeing that the King must guard
That which he rules, and is but as the hind
To whom a space of land is given to plow.
Who may not wander from the allotted field
Before his work be done; but, being done,
Let visions of the night or of the day
Come, as they will; and many a time they come,
Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,
This air that smites his forehead is not air
But vision—yea his very hand and foot—
In moments when he feels he cannot die,
And knows himself no vision to himself,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
Who rose again: ye have seen what ye have seen."

After this loss of the knights in the vain quest, all grows worse. The King himself remains pure and lofty in all his aims, but all the rest changes. His knights no longer keep their vows,

"Such vows, as is a shame
A man should not be bound by, yet the which
No man can keep."

His queen Guinevere, whom he loves wholly and purely, is false to him, and that with his noblest knight and dearest friend, Lancelot: even the King, slow to believe evil, must see it, and he parts from her forever in this life; in his farewell the only hope he can give her is—

"Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,
Hereafter in that world where all are pure
We two may meet before high God, and thou
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine and know
I am thy husband,—not a smaller soul,
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,
I charge thee, my last hope. * * *
* * * Now must I hence.
Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet blow;
They summon me their King to lead mine hosts
Far down to that great battle in the west,
Where I must strike against the man they call
My sister's son—no kin of mine, who leagues
With Lords of the White Horse, heathen, and knights,
Traitors—and strike him dead, and meet myself
Death, or I know not what mysterious doom."

This battle is told in "The Passing of Arthur," which begins,—

"That story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
First made and latest left of all the knights,
Told, when the man was no more than a voice
In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other minds."

This battle is not like those that have been fought before, but is rather the last great struggle through which every man must pass, when all the mortal powers fail one by one until nothing is left but the immortal soul. Every line of this part of the poem, and especially of the part added in the final completion, is full of meaning, so that it is very hard to select for quotation.

"Then rose the King and moved his host by night,
And ever pushed Sir Mordred, league by league,
Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse—
A land of old upheaven from the abyss
By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
And the long mountains ended in a coast
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
There the pursuer could pursue no more,
And he that fled no further fly the King;
And there, that day when the great light of heaven
Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,
On the waste sand by the waste sea they closed.
Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, wierd battle of the west.

A death white mist slept over sand and sea:
Whereof the chill to him who breathed it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear; and ev'n on Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew;
And some had visions out of golden youth,
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
Was many a noble deed, many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in single fight,
And ever and anon with host to host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
Of battleaxes on shattered helms, and shrieks
After the Christ, of those who falling down
Looked up for heaven, and only saw the mist;
And shouts of heathen and the traitor knights,

Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of the lungs
In that close mist, aud cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last as by some one deathbed after wail
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death
Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that shore,
Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous day
Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came
A bitter wind, clear from the North, and blew
The mist aside, and with that wind the tide
Rose, and the pale King glanced across the field
Of battle: but no man was moving there,
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
And shivered brands that once had fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day long
Had held the field of battle was the King:

"Hearest thou this great voice that shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm whereon we move,
And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as tho' they had not died for me?
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall'n
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be King.
Behold, I seem but King among the dead."

Now at the very last, when only Bedivere is left of all his knights, Arthur sees Mordred, the traitor knight, who has brought back the heathen into the realm, standing unharmed; with the last blow of his sword Excalibur the King strikes him dead, but falls himself grievously wounded by Mordred's stroke. But though all his knights have fallen, though all that was dear to him is gone, though everything on which he leaned has failed him, he cannot die; yet in the mist and uncertainty of the battlefield he knows not where he is to go. His sword Excalibur must be given back to the hand from which it came; the sword which had

"on one side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,
'Take me;' but turn the blade and ye shall see,

And written in the speech ye speak yourself
'Cast me away!' And sad was Arthur's face
Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,
'Take thou and strike! the time to cast away
Is yet far off.' "

This was at Arthur's Coronation; and now at his command Sir Bedivere casts the sword far out over the lake, from the water of which rises

"an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

Then Sir Bedivere carries the King to the margin of the lake, whence the three Queens bear him in a funeral barge far off from sight; his last words to Bedivere,—

"But now farewell, I am going a long way
With these thou seest. * * *
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail or rain, or any snow,
Nor even wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

As Sir Bedivere sees the black hull moving far off, he cries

"He passes to be King among the dead,
And after healing of his grievous wound
He comes again."

And I think the glory of the return from this world to the true life of the higher self has seldom been better shown than this:—

"Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars."

Throughout the whole of the poem we feel, even when we cannot distinctly see, deep meanings for the inner consciousness. We cannot make any definite formulas, that this character represents this, and that, that; but everywhere we see that the King represents the highest; fealty to him is the chief duty.

"Strike for the King and live! his knights have heard
That God hath told the King a secret word.
Fall battleaxe and flash brand! Let the King reign.

Blow Trumpet! he will lift us from the dust.
Blow trumpet! live the strength and die the lust!
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

Strike for the King and die! and if thou diest
The King is King, and ever wills the highest.
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign."

The King is immortal; the lower self may, it must, die, and if it die in obedience to the King's command, it is an honor and glory to it; again and again in the poem, in speaking of the bravery and honor of a good knight, the end is

"and fell at last
In the great battle fighting for the King,"

or like Geraint,

"he crown'd
A happy life with a fair death, and fell
Against the heathen of the Northern Sea
In battle, fighting for the blameless King."

In this sense the King may be considered as the true spiritual self, of which we various lower selves are but fragments, which can only win unity by giving up the fragmentary personality.

Guinevere, too late for this life, sees how she has been false to her duty and honor;

"Ah, my God,
What might I not have made of thy fair world
Had I but loved thy highest creature here?
It was my duty to have loved the highest;
It surely was my profit had I known;
It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
We needs must love the highest when we see it,
Not Lancelot, nor another."

In the last battle, Bedivere speaks thus plainly:—

"My King,
King everywhere! and so the dead have kings,
There also will I worship thee as King."

And Arthur replies,

"And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,
When all the purport of my throne hath failed,
That quick or dead thou holdest me for King.
King am I, whatsoever be their cry."

At first sight it seems as if, in the failure of the high hopes with which the Round Table was founded, all is lost, that the King's passage "from the great deep to the great deep" has been fruitless. But though earthly plans have failed, the soul bears to its higher realm of rest and joy a strengthened character, which, when he returns once more, will fight a stronger fight, and

"then or now
Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,
Till these and all men hail him for their king."

His knights have fallen, but many, like Sir Bedivere, living or dead, will hold him for their King. Guinevere and Lancelot wronged him worst of all; but Guinevere, deeply repentant, after a holy life,

"past
To where beyond these voices there is peace."

And Lancelot, tearing the poisonous from the wholesome flower, died at last a holy man. The good in Arthur has stirred up the evil around him to sharper, fiercer opposition; but the world is the better for his reign.

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

F. S. COLLINS.

THINKING VERSUS READING.

The opinion of theosophical students is divided in respect to reading. There are those who consider that the chief source of learning is study, while others deprecate much reading and urge us to confine our efforts to "living the life." The truth of course is that both methods are to be combined. They serve different departments of the same end. By study—especially of scriptures—we are enabled to form more just ideas of what "the life" may be, and in what way we shall live it. By living it, we correct all mistaken ideas; we shave and prune the excrescences of the mind. The application of spiritual (impersonal) ideas in daily life; the study of how we may hold to them amid the practical routine; the endeavor to discover them within all material conditions and things; the effort to develop them; broaden the nature and enable us, through the spiritual will, to alchemize it into spiritual essences and powers. Nothing is wholly material; if it were it could not exist, it could not cohere for an instant. That mysterious force which is within all things and enables them to "live," or to advance through successive changes, is what we call Spirit. In Bhagavad-Gita we find that Purush and Prakriti, or Spirit (energy) and Nature, are forever conjoined. All the powers existing in the macrocosm having also their various specific seats in man, it follows plainly that, if we wish to evolve more rapidly by means of these powers, as the universe also evolves by them, we must think and think within ourselves. These forces are under the guidance of will, thought, and knowledge;[1] reading will never enable

1 Itchasakti, Kriyasakti, Gnanasakti. See "Five Years of Theosophy," Page 110.

us to reach them: thinking may put us on their track. To examine this question of reading. What is it that we do when we read? It is not reading to repeat, parrot like, words which we instantly forget, like the infant class over its primer. The eye encounters certain words and an idea is conveyed to the brain. Is this all? For certain persons it is all. They accept this idea as a form, a crystallization representing a certain state of things. If it attracts them, they retain and quote it; otherwise they dismiss it. In either case it is to them a finality. Such persons have their brains stored with such formulas; they have never lived them out, even in the mind; they do not really know the idea represented by this form of words at all. The fancy or the prejudice has been tickled by mere sound. All this is so much useless lumber. Show them what some of their favorite ideas really involve if carried out, and they cast them aside in disgust or dismay. This is the sort of reading which is much to be deprecated, along with that other kind undertaken to "pass time." That an idea is a seed which, once planted, should sprout and grow, they do not see. That all ideas have a specific, energic life of their own, and that this life is directly proportionate to the vitality (or truth) of the idea, they do not see. That thoughts have a power of self reproduction, bearing a thousandfold for use or misuse, that they have an insidious and tremendous power, none but occultists know. That a part of the vital energy and real being of a writer is diffused throughout every page even of his printed works and more or less affects the reader as a psycho-magnetic entity, is rarely thought of at all. Every thought modifies the mind; it energizes according to the nature of those thoughts, diffusing a pernicious, weak, or beneficent force about us. If they are too rapidly forced upon it, the mind becomes gorged; we have mental dyspepsia and an unhealthy condition, not only in the internal organ called mind, but also in the physical organs which quickly respond to its condition. A habit of the mind is soon formed, and, like the dyspeptic, it craves abnormal quantities of food, alternated with periods of sluggish inertia: moreover, it becomes habituated to certain kinds of stimulus; if we feed it long upon novels or excitement, it will reject more healthy food. A greater reason for careful choice of reading than all these is found in the fact that something within us, that thing which knows and strives to make us know, takes advantage of the vibration set up in the mental (and through that to the outer) man to transfuse his understanding with more light. This something, this soul, leaps up within us, touched by the current flowing from those thoughts, and asserts of them, "They are true!" or, "They are false!" Thus books may help us to remember, to recall what we have lost. And no man to whom life is sacred will wish to expend those energies of which life consists in any idle fashion, or to develop their lower forms when the higher are equally at his command.

How then shall we read? When we have reason to believe that the writer knows somewhat of his subject, we may assume a receptive attitude. Where such is not the case we cannot usefully read at all. We may not judge our author. He may have found truths unsuited to us now, or teach them in ways which we are unfitted to pursue; this being so, we shall do well to avoid what is at present unhealthy nourishment. Where we feel attracted and do read, we should receive the idea into our minds and, submitting ourselves passively to its influence, note what impression is stamped upon the sensitized plate within. The true character of the idea is *felt* rather than intellectually cognized, and by such a study of the interior impression we receive the verdict of the hidden judge. We need dread no *Vehmgericht* but this; by it all stands or falls.[1] To attain this end we must hold ourselves still. The outer self must maintain an attitude of suspended judgment, or up comes our mere personality with quips, cranks, whims, opinions, and loves, drowning the inner voice with its racket and hubbub.

Another way of utilizing ideas is to assume their merit and to study wherein that merit may possibly consist, what fine ray has escaped our grosser sight. For example: I quoted to a comrade this line; "We must be ready to say at any moment, in whatever circumstances, whether expected or unexpected: 'It is just what I in fact desired'."[2] My comrade replied that this appeared to him hypocritical. If he lost an arm, for instance, he could cheerfully submit, but he could not in truth say that he desired precisely that accident. This objection has a surface correctness. Had he read with an assumption that the line must have some truth in it, and had he examined it in that belief, he would doubtless have found its true bearing, while such personal exertion opens up a mind and nourishes it as no artificial injection can do. That true bearing is that the re-incarnating soul has chosen those circumstances most needed for its evolution; to work out that evolution we must work through our Karma; there is no other way. Hence my Higher Self, my real self, did in fact desire just that body and all its Karmic circumstances and life as a necessary experience for my soul at this juncture, the soul having to pass through all experiences, and though *i* may not desire them, *I* do. No true statements can be based upon the assumption that the personality, or even the lower principles of the soul, is the real ego at all.

There is again another point to be guarded against in reading books other than sacred writings, whose inner meaning we strive to assimilate. It is the reverse of the one above stated, and cautions us against too great mental hospitality. It is the danger of basing our faith upon the personality of the writer. If we do this, were he the Jove of Theosophy himself,

1 Vehmgericht. A secret tribunal of old.

2 See PATH for Feb., 1888, page 328.

we may receive injury rather than benefit. We may have good reason to believe him possessed of more or less knowledge. Whether he has himself assimilated that knowledge is again another question. An initiate will have done so, and the real value of his writings for us will consist in the fact of his being himself those truths which he gives out: he is himself the word and the sign of his degree. Only in so far as he has lived out his knowledge and *become it*, can he impart it beneficially to its readers in turn. Otherwise he runs the risk of presenting partial Truths through the medium of his own personality and tinging them thereby. In this way, with the best will in the world perhaps, he gives to students himself and not the Truth, gives his warped edition of it. As an occult fact, we can only gives ourselves and no more; hence to give Truth we must be It. Herein lies the value of the writings of initiates, ending with those of our beloved Madame Blavatsky, who alone has dared to speak plainly to her era. The movement she inaugurated and the well-spring of teachings she opened for us to draw upon have been the means of renown for many writers who, without her initial courage, had never won an audience or a name. Even as one of the very least of these, I say: "May we never forget the debt."

Were all readers forewarned and ready to discount the personality, this danger would be lessened. Such discrimination in these matters is a spiritual quality not as yet generally found among men: it is a power of the soul, a more or less direct perception of Truth. It behooves the writer desirous of serving mankind to look well to his words, to the form in which he imprisons so much of the Truth as he has found, and to strive earnestly only to give forth so much of it as he himself embodies in life, so much as he has become. Great harm is constantly done by the spread of brain and lip knowledge, to be proven false supports by suffering men. And we do better to take the tone of suggestion rather than that of authority. We may have touched upon our higher powers without having fully raised the nature to them. While we are but man we only see by glimpses; then the veil falls again. So I would preface all writings with the request that the reader be guided by his own natural selection to a very great extent.

Many writers, too, have come into this life with a special task to perform. They have something to say or to give, and when it is done, their usefulness to humanity is over; they seem then to have outlived themselves; long before their bodies pass into the ranks of the unseen, their virility and life-giving power have departed. We often see this fatal high-water mark in the life of the poet, the painter, the leader we followed and loved; see that he can never surpass it, that he has touched his highest state for this incarnation. To remain there is impossible. A law of nature decrees that he must advance or recede; in nature there is no standing still. We ask ourselves who has set this fatal limit, and we see clearly that the man alone

has done himself this wrong. It is Karma, but a Karma of his own making. Some there are who pass, indeed, beyond that limit to intellectual greatness, but in doing so they have passed beyond our ordinary sight and have joined the silent workers in the Lodge of Truth. The only indication left us of their progress is the fact that they have never fallen to a lower level than that great one where we saw them standing. They have never followed up their words of power by the impotent babble of senility. Few indeed are these men, for "many are called, but few are chosen." They are those who have a Karmic stock of spiritual energy sufficient to flood them over the crisis, and they use their highest intellectuality as a stepping stone to that which lies beyond intellect and above thought. The lesser men suffer. They have done so much, sacrificed so much, they do not understand why their words are no longer snatched from their lips and passed eagerly along the expectant throng. It is because those words are vain repetitions; they are no longer living, winged things. The speaker has not renewed his thought; he has fallen to worshipping his own methods; he makes an apotheosis of his present knowledge instead of reaching up to the realms of real life for new, vital essences. Thought, however broad, follows a circle at last, and in it he runs like a squirrel turning a wheel with puerile activity.

The mere fact that a man thinks he has done something or sacrificed something should show him his mistake. Deeds have been done through him, not by him. His so-called sacrifice was his opportunity to rise to real greatness, and only his half methods have limited it to a sacrifice. Some cry out in despair that it had been better to do nothing at all. I would not say that. The irresistible waves surge onward and bear us to a certain point: we may lie there long; still this is so much progress which we can never lose. The pity is that we should not arise ourselves and go further without waiting for the next tide.

These considerations show us that disagreements between theosophical writers are often unavoidable, the writers being but men and women. It is to our advantage to use our discriminative powers, to strengthen them by use. So we are not injured by these differences. We are more injured if we stake our faith upon any one or several writers, just because when our idols crumble,—and crumble they must, we are so often found in the dust beneath them, found stunned and wounded by their fall. "Let a man learn to bear the disappearance of the things he was wont to reverence without losing his reverence." A truer word than that Emerson never wrote. We are instruments in mighty hands: if we turn our edge, we must expect to be laid aside. We must then refrain from solidifying our thoughts into a system, our reports of Truth into dogmas. We may not be dazzled even by the highest heavens, but must worship Truth alone.

Thus the whole problem for both writer and reader consists in eschew-

ing mere forms, in looking beyond words to the principles which they represent faintly. A man represents one or more universals; his thought should do the same. He will never mislead while he only gives us these; we shall never misunderstand him while we look for nothing less. All reading is useless, so far as spiritual progress is concerned, which cannot be conducted upon the above lines. If they limit your reading, they will extend your thinking. So much the better, for thinking is the path toward becoming. "What a man thinks, that he is; this is the old secret," say the Upanishads. There is a way of taking a thought and brooding over it as a bird broods on the nest; by this method the true thought hatches out and itself manifests to us. We must apply these thoughts to the touchstone of our own souls. Reading and thinking are not to be divorced. They should be one act; then each would correct and equilibrate the other.

My last word upon this subject would be this, and I would say it emphatically. Never receive and pass onward a thought which you do not feel and understand. On this point accept no authority other than your own soul. It is better that you seem to lose a ray of Truth than to accept and deflect it by a want of understanding, a want of assimilation of it. If it be yours in the Law, you cannot lose it. It will be sent to you again and again until you do receive it. Take then what your nature selects until you reach a point where you can rise above nature. When this is reached you will not need to read any longer, except from the wonderful book of life and from those blessed Scriptures wherein the Divine has spoken to the ages through men who had attained to some share in His being.

JASPER NIEMAND, F. T. S.

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE AND THEOSOPHY.

There is growing every day among contemporary writers a strong disposition to take up theosophic doctrine, and especially in those light stories that always flow from ideas that are "in the air." This will grow as time goes on, for every one with any means of judging knows that the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation are gaining a hold, slowly perhaps, but surely, on the public mind. Both of these offer a wide field for novelists and magazine writers.

In a recent number of the *Century*, Mr. Stevenson, who writes such charming stories, and also weird ones like *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, gave an account—in some sense a confession—of how his best stories and plots came to him. He said that all his life, in dreams and waking visions, his

"little Brownies" showed him scenes, incidents, and plots that he wove into his writings, and that the main situations in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* were obtained in that manner.

The field is extended enough. None of the possibilities of black or white Magic have been touched on except by such writers as Mabel Collins, one of the Editors of *Lucifer*, but as that comes to be better understood—or misunderstood, which is the same thing for those who write for their daily bread—we shall be flooded with a series of tales and sketches based on these ideas. This suggestion is not copyrighted, so that aspiring authors can use it as they will, to their hearts' content.

The rising tide is shown when such a staid, and anciently somewhat bigoted, magazine as *Harper's Monthly* treats of these matters. In *Harper's* for May last, Mr. Charles Dudley Warner, in the "Editor's Drawer," takes up the subject of Heredity so as to use it for the bringing in of Karma and Reincarnation, together with some light remarks about the theosophists of India, Boston, and Ohio. He considers Heredity to be a puzzle, mourning a little that the progress made in questions of the effect of breeding and descent was to some extent impeded by these notions. But he also gives a fair resumé of Karma, clearly showing that responsibility for deeds done in the body must rest upon the individual, and cannot be shifted to his ancestors. We have to thank him for his words, since he reaches clearly the gist of the matter in saying: "The notion is that all human beings in this world undergo successive incarnations, preserving unconsciously the personal identity in all the changes of condition. Therefore, every human being is the result of all the influences in all his previous conditions. * * * The form in which he shall reappear in the world is not determined by his visible ancestors, but by his conduct in his former lives. * * * But whatever he was, now in this present incarnation he suffers the penalty of all his misdeeds in all former states of being, or he enjoys the reward of good conduct in any of them. And it behooves him now to live the higher life—perhaps of expiation—in order that he may rise into a still higher life in the next unknown incarnation, and not sink into a lower. Therefore no effort is thrown away, and no act is without its infinite personal consequences. The law of Karma, it is explained, is the law of the conservation of energy on the moral and spiritual planes of nature * * * The Drawer, of course, has nothing to do with an investigation of this theory of life; it simply notes it in reference to the prevalent study of the doctrine of heredity."

This is just the doctrine the people need, and it can easily be understood. When they come to believe that there is no way of escape, either through priest or mere lip-acceptance of a dogma, they will begin so to live, if only for selfish reasons, as that the "next unknown incarnation" will

not find them in suffering and misery. While the motive at first may not be of the highest character, it will lead to a wide belief in the doctrines, so that, as the spirit of the age is changed, those who are sincere and unselfish will not have such a hard fight to wage against subtle and dangerous influences. In fine, it will prepare the conditions for the dawn of the day when human brotherhood shall be admitted and lived. Men will then see that legislation and strikes and outward temporary reforms can cure no evil. The evil lies within, in other lives, in this one. In a sense, we are our own ancestors; we are building now the houses we are to live in during our coming lives. For our ignorance of this, nature recks not; she holds us fast in an iron grasp, and will compel us at last through pain to believe in the true doctrine, and to live our lives and think our thoughts in submission to the Higher Law that no human assemblies can revoke.

CONVERSATIONS ON OCCULTISM.

ELEMENTALS—KARMA.

Student.—Permit me to ask you again, Are elementals beings?

Sage.—It is not easy to convey to you an idea of the constitution of elementals; strictly speaking, they are not, because the word *elementals* has been used in reference to a class of them that have no being such as mortals have. It would be better to adopt the terms used in Indian books, such as Gandharvas, Bhuts, Pisachas, Devas, and so on. Many things well known about them cannot be put into ordinary language.

Student.—Do you refer to their being able to act in the fourth dimension of space?

Sage.—Yes, in a measure. Take the tying in an endless cord of many knots,—a thing often done at spiritist séances. That is possible to him who knows more dimensions of space than three. No three-dimensional being can do this; and as you understand "matter," it is impossible for you to conceive how such a knot can be tied or how a solid ring can be passed through the matter of another solid one. These things can be done by elementals.

Student.—Are they not all of one class?

Sage.—No. There are different classes for each plane, and division of plane, of nature. Many can never be recognized by men. And those pertaining to one plane do not act in another. You must remember, too, that these "planes" of which we are speaking interpenetrate each other.

Student.—Am I to understand that a clairvoyant or clairaudient has to do with or is effected by a certain special class or classes of elementals?

Sage.—Yes. A clairvoyant can only see the sights properly belonging to the planes his development reaches to or has opened. And the elementals in those planes show to the clairvoyant only such pictures as belong to their plane. Other parts of the idea or thing pictured may be retained in planes not yet open to the seer. For this reason few clairvoyants know the whole truth.

Student.—Is there not some connection between the Karma of man and elementals?

Sage.—A very important one. The elemental world has become a strong factor in the Karma of the human race. Being unconscious, automatic, and photographic, it assumes the complexion of the human family itself. In the earlier ages, when we may postulate that man had not yet begun to make bad Karma, the elemental world was more friendly to man because it had not received unfriendly impressions. But so soon as man began to become ignorant, unfriendly to himself and the rest of creation, the elemental world began to take on exactly the same complexion and return to humanity the exact pay, so to speak, due for the actions of humanity. Or, like a donkey, which, when he is pushed against, will push against you. Or, as a human being, when anger or insult is offered, feels inclined to return the same. So the elemental world, being unconscious force, returns or reacts upon humanity exactly as humanity acted towards it, whether the actions of men were done with the knowledge of these laws or not. So in these times it has come to be that the elemental world has the complexion and action which is the exact result of all the actions and thoughts and desires of men from the earliest times. And, being unconscious and only acting according to the natural laws of its being, the elemental world is a powerful factor in the workings of Karma. And so long as mankind does not cultivate brotherly feeling and charity towards the whole of creation, just so long will the elementals be without the impulse to act for our benefit. But so soon and wherever man or men begin to cultivate brotherly feeling and love for the whole of creation, there and then the elementals begin to take on the new condition.

Student.—How then about the doing of phenomena by adepts?

Sage.—The production of phenomena is not possible without either the aid or disturbance of elementals. Each phenomenon entails the expenditure of great force, and also brings on a correspondingly great disturbance in the elemental world, which disturbance is beyond the limit natural to ordinary human life. It then follows that, as soon as the phenomenon is completed, the disturbance occasioned begins to be compensated for.

The elementals are in greatly excited motion, and precipitate themselves in various directions. They are not able to affect those who are protected. But they are able, or rather it is possible for them, to enter into the sphere of unprotected persons, and especially those persons who are engaged in the study of occultism. And then they become agents in concentrating the karma of those persons, producing troubles and disasters often, or other difficulties which otherwise might have been so spread over a period of time as to be not counted more than the ordinary vicissitudes of life. This will go to explain the meaning of the statement that an Adept will not do a phenomenon unless he sees the desire in the mind of another lower or higher Adept or student; for then there is a sympathetic relation established, and also a tacit acceptance of the consequences which may ensue. It will also help to understand the peculiar reluctance often of some persons, who can perform phenomena, to produce them in cases where we may think their production would be beneficial; and also why they are never done in order to compass worldly ends, as is natural for worldly people to suppose might be done,—such as procuring money, transferring objects, influencing minds, and so on.

Student.—Accept my thanks for your instruction.

Sage.—May you reach the terrace of enlightenment!"

Answers to Questioners.

From M. C. D.

I am told that an Adept has said "that one can help or cure another if his Karma does not prevent it." Am I to understand that when suffering is before me I am not to relieve it if in my power to do so, on the ground that the suffering person's Karma has brought him there and I must not interfere? Some Theosophists have enunciated this rule.

Answer.—If an Adept said this it is not incorrect. But no Adept ever drew the conclusion you give. Some Theosophists have, we are sorry to say, declared that they may not help for the reason stated. It is not theosophical to take such a position. The sufferer's Karma truly produced the suffering, but your Karma offers the opportunity for a kind deed that may relieve him; it may be his Karma to be relieved by you. It is your duty to do this kind act, of whatever nature it be. The meaning of the declaration attributed to the Adept is that you are to try to relieve suffering, which effort will have a beneficial effect unless the Karma of the sufferer prevents: but you know nothing of his Karma and must not judge it; your duty lies in the act presented to you for performance, and not with its result nor with the possible hindrances resulting from the Karma. The

wrong view given by you in your question arises from the conceited attitude of persons who, having slight knowledge, presume to be the judges of others and of the great and hidden causes springing from Karma. Knowledge of these causes and of their operation in any particular case comes only to those who have reached Adeptship; for, in order to rightly judge how to rightly act, you must know absolutely the other's Karma, together with your own, in order not to fall into the awful error of deliberately sinning. It would be wiser for all students to seek to do their duty and to act as true brothers on every occasion than to run about endeavoring to imitate Sages and Adepts. MOULVIE.

From B. J.

What can you tell me about the Mind Cure and Christian Science? Are they true, are they theosophical? Ought I to study them so as to be *mens sana in corpore sano*, as it were?

Answer.—As we have not made a thorough study of these, we could not assume to tell you much about them, and hence cannot say if they are true or theosophical. Many earnest theosophists are believers and followers of both. We, however, have been trained in the Eastern theosophical school. Following the teaching of the latter, our advice is to have a healthy body by paying regard to rules for health, so that your mind, whether it be healthy or not, may exhibit its workings untrammeled. And the teacher has ever said, as taught by the Sages of old, that the body must not be *the object* of the student's care. The same teacher also warned us that, as the body is a material thing, the proper remedies needed to counteract extreme discordant vibrations are also of a material nature. Our work lies not with your body, but with your mind and heart. See to it that the latter is right. The quantity and quality of mind that are yours may be little or poor, but even if great and good, the heart and soul are greater, and mind has its limits beyond which it passes not. MOULVIE.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"THE SECRET DOCTRINE."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE PATH":

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER:—In the February number of THE PATH you have published a letter written by several American Theosophists to our respected Founder, Madame Blavatsky, asking her to hasten the publication of "The Secret Doctrine," which, it is alleged, has not come out yet because some Indian Pundits are against it.

It seems to us that the letter has been based upon information which is not correct. Had Madame Blavatsky been in India, the book would long

ago have seen the light. Owing, however, to her stay in Europe, it has not been found so very easy to have the great work revised, as had been originally proposed.

Parts of the work were sent to this country, when some good suggestions were made with a view to enhance the value of the book by making it more exact in its allusions to Hindu literature. These suggestions were misunderstood by some who communicated their own views on the matter to Europe, and we fear Madame Blavatsky herself has not been properly informed in what way the revision was proposed to be effected. Had she herself been here, she would, with her usual candor and good sense, have at once understood the situation and cheerfully taken up the well-meant suggestions. Occult ideas and doctrines ought to be made to stand on their own intrinsic merits, and not on the authority of any person or persons; and as there is a possibility of making this truly marvellous work more acceptable to the public, more useful and instructive, we hope and trust that the suggestions that have been made will be carried out.

There is no opposition here against the publication of the mysteries of occultism. A few sympathetic friends can easily arrange to have the work revised, if the false impressions produced by unfounded reports were forgotten and the work placed in the hands of those who are capable of revising it.

Yours fraternally,

N. D. KHANDALAVALA; RUSTOMJI ARDESHIR MASTER; TOOKARAM TATYA; SHAMARÀR VITHAL; J. C. DORABJI; MANCHERSHÀ KAVASJI; K. M. SHROFF; HAMRA RUSTOMJI; J. N. IŚAAC; PHEROZSHAW RUSTOMJI METITA; RUSTOMJI K. MODI; PESTONJE NOURSJI PAVDI, *G. G. M. College;* ARDESHIR SORABJI, *Engineer;* COWASJI DOSSÀBHOY DAVAR; N. F. BILIMORIÀ; FRAMJEE B. BILLIMORIA.

BOMBAY, INDIA, *April, 1888.*

To the Editor of PATH:

In the May number of your valuable journal, on page 60, we read:

"With much deference we venture to invite the attention of *Lucifer* to the grave etymological objections to its definition of pentacle as a *six*-pointed star."

The attention of our benevolent corrector is invited to "Webster's Complete Dictionary of the English Language, *thoroughly revised and improved* by Chauncey A. Goodrich, D. D., L. L., D., late Professor of Yale College, and Noah Porter, D. D., *Professor of Moral Philosophy and Metaphysics* in Yale College, assisted by Dr. C. A. F. Mahn of Berlin and others. New edition of 1880, etc., etc., London.

At the word "Pentacle," we read as follows:—

"Pentacle—a figure composed of two equilateral triangles, intersecting so

as to form a SIX-*pointed star*, used in ornamental art, and also with superstitious import by the astrologers, etc."

This (Fairholt's) definition is preceded by saying that *pentacle* is a word from Greek PENTE, *five*,—which every school-boy knows. But *pente* or five has nothing to do with the word pentacle, which Eliphas Levi, as all Frenchmen and Kabalists, spells *pantacle* (with an *a* and not with an *e*), and which is more correct than the English and less puzzling. For, with as much "deference" as shown by PATH to *Lucifer*, *Lucifer* ventures to point out to PATH that, according to old Kabalistic phraseology, a *pantacle* is "*any magic figure* intended to produce results."

Therefore if any one is to be taken to task for overlooking "the grave etymological objections to the definition of pentacle as a six-pointed star," it is the great Professors who have just revised Webster's Dictionary, and not *Lucifer*. Our corrector has evidently confused *Pentagon* with *pentacle*. "Errare humanum est."

Meanwhile, as *Lucifer* was already laughed at for this *supposed* error by some readers of the PATH, the latter will not, it is hoped, refuse to insert these few words at its earliest convenience, and thus justify its colleague from such an uncalled-for charge of *blunder and ignorance*. Let us correct each other's mistakes and errors, by all means; but let us also be fair to each other.

Fraternally,

THE EDITORS OF "LUCIFER".

LONDON, *May 21, 1888.*

TEA TABLE TALK.

A correspondent writes as follows: "Tea Table; I am not particularly interested in the psychometric experiences related at the Tea Table, but it seems that you consider them valuable, or at least interesting. I question very much if mine are worth telling, but I will give them."

(Let me interpolate here, that this sentence is of itself interesting to students as a proof of how frequently we deceive ourselves as to our own nature. Who reads, thinks over, or gathers together similar incidents, or sends information to one for whom he has good wishes, on a subject in which he is "not particularly interested"?)

"Since I have been searching for the Truth, I have had innumerable experiences like the following; they all run in one line and prove to me that 'The Unseen gives Unseen aid.' I saw at our Art Museum a picture called 'The Automedon.' That was a new word to me, and I wondered what it meant. I looked in the dictionary for it, and the word was not there. Then I, as it seemed, carelessly took up a book of European travel, opened it at random, and the first words I saw were, 'The coach dashed up to the door, and the Automedon cried Whoa!'

"I came across a bit of poetry signed Havergal. Who was Havergal? I did not know. The next day a package came to me wrapped in a news-

paper; as I untied it my eye caught these words: 'Frances R. Havergal was born so and so;' a short sketch of her life.

"Many, many years ago I read Leigh Hunt's Abou Ben Adhem; I liked it, but it passed completely from conscious memory." (Let me interpolate that Mohini Babu had a good phrase for such mental lapse: "It passed out of the active part of my mind.")

"This winter some thought in the Bhagavad Gita recalled it, and I wished I could read it again, but I had forgotten it was Hunt's and knew not how to find it. The next week some person unknown to me sent me from New York a paper with that poem in it.

"An occasional incident like those given above of course proves nothing, but a constant recurrence of them does, I think."

They prove in all instances the attractive power of thought, which is a spiritual lodestone. And I would ask my kind and valued correspondent why, if such incidents prove to her mind that "the Unseen gives unseen aid," they may not do so to many another. I do not consider any of these things so "interesting or valuable" *in themselves*. But as subtle and constant indications of a great undercurrent which we might otherwise ignore, and as proofs of its presence in the most ordinary lives, I do consider them useful and as being there to be used, provided they are looked at in the right light. This right light is set forth by a letter from a young theosophist which was shown to me (and from which I take the liberty of quoting, unknown to its writer), namely, to regard them as analogies and indicators of rules which bear universal application.

"I have thought a good deal about the suggestions in your letter, and, the more I think, the more strongly am I impressed that they voice an important truth. I have always tried not to be sorry for failures in business matters, but when some project has failed, or carelessness or ignorance has caused loss of money or something else, have tried to appropriate the *experience* and disregard the loss." (This is indeed the process described in *Gates of Gold* as "the kernel is within the shell, and that, instead of crunching up the whole nut like a gross and indifferent feeder, the essence of the thing is obtained by cracking the shell and casting it away.") "I believe this is a good plan in business matters, and now I believe it *is* good simply because it is a shadow, so to speak, of a profound spiritual truth, and it strikes me constantly that so many of the rules given for spiritual development are just the very best for a man to paste up in his office to do business by. This may read queerly, but I mean that the eternal analogy between things great and small, high and low, is constantly appearing. It seems to me that the maxim, 'As above, so below,' is of universal application."

This is of course true; it is these correspondences we must study and understand. There is no break in the chain of life or consciousness. We are to live on out "through night to light" from the spot where we now stand, and all these delicate clues are sent us at once to show us the way, to open up our minds, and to be used as aids to still higher steps. The true intuition speaks in the above letter. Another instance of this natural power pro-

claiming the truth of correspondences was given to me yesterday by the child "Bun," of whom my readers have heard.

Bun came over to call on his old friend, and found me installed in my arm chair, grumpy, grim, and disinclined to romp by reason of—let us say gout. Bun had excused me from a supper-party of his Father's the night before for the same reason, and, peeping down over the stair rail at the guests, had missed a chat with his old friend. So he was discouraged, and now informed me that I was "too always in gout" and he guessed I would die. This opinion was delivered in a lachrymose drawl from the arm of my chair. His eyes then fell on a yellow dandelion in his own button-hole; their wonderful fringes uplifted; the great eyes flashed and glowed, and a beaming smile showed his small, even, white teeth. "The flowers dies, an' then they comes back: we'll come back too. You'll go first; you'll come back first a little boy; you was little oncest. Then you'll have to wait for me."

"I think so too, Bun."

"But you'll come back away off from here, away, way, *way* off. How'll we find us?"

"Like we did this time. I was born far away from here, but I found you on the pike." (An allusion to our first meeting on the highway.)

"Oh, yes. Well, Sir, when I gets *down there* I'm going to watch the seeds bust up. I put seeds in my garden; they bust open, an' that long white thing, don't you know, comes out of 'em. It gets to be leaves you bet, an' flowers too. I digg*ed* one up to see; it was bust open an' it died. I'm going to watch out *down there* an' see them seeds all bust up an' grow."

A beautiful thought, this, of childhood; to utilize the grave to discover the secrets of nature, and the flowers to disclose the higher truths of the soul's return.

Among the many events illustrative of past Karma working in present lives, none are more eloquent to the student of occultism than those by means of which he is first led into Theosophy. With many persons, this is a matter of gradually increasing interest from the earliest period of their lives, which culminates at some given point; with others it lies dormant until mature years, and is then of more rapid but still gradual growth. Yet another class—and this one is more rare—suddenly find themselves in the grip of an irresistible force which sweeps them away from all previous moorings and transports them to the new regions of occultism, new, yet weirdly familiar, as if they had known them in forgotten dreams. It may interest my fellow students to hear the story told to the Tea Table by a lady well known to many of us, of her entrance into theosophic life.

"You know I was what is called 'a woman of the world,' both by birth and circumstances of education and so forth. I was a member of a fashionable Protestant sect; I had a full life, brilliant in its joys and setting, dramatic in all its variations and climaxes, almost tragic at times through sudden glooms of many deaths. It was a crest-of-the-wave life, and always I went with the current unquestioning. Of any undercurrent I had no thought; my days were so crowded, and I rose buoyantly to every day of

pain or pleasure. My intellectual and artistic interests were very great, and I revelled in them, in nature, in society, even in the intense storms of emotion, or of sudden change, of music, of poetry, of travel. I questioned none of these things. I never asked the meaning of Life. That it was a great whole, a science, a mystery, I never thought. My ideas, so to say, were separate entities; I never consciously related them or passing events to one another. Yet the sequel shows the action of a great sub-conscious life and growth: the hidden *knower* related all these things. In the anguish born of those sorrows where the overwhelmed heart cries out for a God it can understand to help it bear these upheavals, I too often called upon some God and longed to know something of Him. I felt that I could and must know Him. Yet when the silence gave me no answer and the new day bore me away into Life, I accepted man's ignorance as final and hopeless, and apparently forgot the brief intensity of my search. That this ever-recurring instinct of a possible knowledge of and union with God, coming always at moments when the blank insufficiency of natural life suddenly confronted the stricken heart, was in fact the soul's cyclic or periodical assertion of His real Being and presence—a faint reminder of its past knowledge,—was what I did not recognize at all. As I said, I did not connect events, and I went on with life just as an awakened man disregards his painful dreams.

One day a telegram from a friend summoned me to an entertainment she was to give in a distant city. This gay summons I obeyed: it was a disguised call from Karma. By an apparent 'accident,' a work of a kind never approached by me that day fell into my hands, *Progress and Poverty* by George. Waiting for my train, I fluttered its leaves because I had nothing else to do. These words met my eye.

'Passing into higher forms of desire, that which slumbered in the plant and fitfully stirred in the beast awakes in the man. The eyes of the mind are opened, and he longs to know. He braves the scorching heat of the desert and the icy blasts of the polar sea, but not for food; he watches all night, but it is to trace the circling of the eternal stars. He adds toil to toil to gratify a hunger no animal has felt, to assuage a thirst no beast can know.

'Out upon nature, in upon himself, back through the mists that shroud the past, forward into the darkness that overhangs the future, turns the restless desire that arises when the animal wants slumber in satisfaction. Beneath things he seeks the law; he would know how the globe was forged and the stars were hung, and trace to their sources the springs of life. And then, as the man develops his nobler nature, there arises the desire higher yet—the passion of passions, the hope of hopes—the desire that he, even he, may somehow aid in making life better and brighter, in destroying want and sin, sorrow and shame. He masters and curbs the animal; he turns his back upon the feast and renounces the place of power; he leaves it to others to accumulate wealth, to gratify pleasant tastes, to bask themselves in the warm sunshine of the brief day. He works for those he never saw and never can see. * * * He toils in the advance, where it is cold, and there is little cheer from men, and the stones are sharp and the brambles

thick. Amid the scoffs of the present and the sneers that stab like knives, he builds for the future; he cuts the trail that progressive humanity may hereafter broaden into a railroad. Into higher, grander spheres desire mounts and beckons, *and a star that rises in the east leads him on. Lo! the pulses of the man throb with the yearnings of the god,—he would aid in the process of the suns.*'

"See how in these lines by me italicized the hidden instinct speaks again through this writer, who is no theosophist or occultist and who in his very next lines denies his own last fine intuition by saying, 'Is not the gulf too wide for analogy to span?'. I have since read this book and found no other message for me in it except this one upon the page which destiny opened for me that idle day. What a passionate tumult they awakened within my breast! Before me rose the People, the vast oceans of Humanity outside my own circle never before thought of; not isolated sections which our organized charities might reach, but the race. It was my first dazzling glimpse of Universal Brotherhood. Yet, like the worldly epicure I was, I enjoyed the poetic emotion and thrust aside the thought. Soon with my friend, I forgot both. That afternoon she opened a magazine which came in the mail and tossed it aside. 'Why do they send me these things? I'm not a theosophist,' she exclaimed.

"What is that?" I asked.

"Mon Dieu! Did you never hear of Theosophy? Nor of Madame Blavatsky? Well, my Dear, you *have* been buried alive."

So I had been, in the remote West for a time, under circumstances not relevant here. My friend then told me of the phenomena performed by Madame Blavatsky, and that she had been invited to hear a 'chela' talk that very afternoon. We would go and ask him how to put ourselves into training to do these things, even dieting if necessary, as it would be such fun to astound our acquaintances. I thought it would be great larks; I vowed to give six months to it if necessary, thinking it some new and wonderful legerdemain. Before dinner we pirouetted up to see the "chela" (who, by the way, never pretended to be one) and get his occult recipes. As we entered the salon of the flat where the meeting took place, I saw the red evening sky between masses of storm—buffetted clouds, and heard a calm voice from the twilight say these words:

'When once you forget yourself, then the first bridge to the Eternal is crossed.'

Never shall I forget that moment, now so profoundly graven upon my heart. In quiet hours I see that far red sky and the gathering shades of night quickened by those words. For an extraordinary prescience, an instant conviction, seized me: 'This is not legerdemain but the true religion, and I have known it before.' I sat down too stunned to listen. A great boundary had given way in my life, and through the breach what astonishing thoughts poured in! Prepared by the first touch of the early afternoon, my softened heart was whirled far out of itself. When I came back to ordinary life I was a changed being; I recognized at once a vast unrecognized want and its fulfilment. Still, as I procured the names of theosophic books from the 'chela,' I determined to weigh and judge all, but, instead, I found a muffled voice within me crying ever, 'It is the truth.' You see now that I am a theosophist, though unworthy, because I must be one: I am irresistibly borne on to it by the impetus of my own soul, the evolution of my own nature. Paraphrasing Royalty of old, I might write myself—'By the grace of God, theosophist.'"

So spoke the Vedas before this student: "He whom the self chooses, by him alone the self can be gained. He sees the majesty of the Self *by the grace of the Creator.*" Just as the supreme illumination only comes through the Eternal Will, so in our daily life theosophic teachings never come truly

home to the soul unprepared by evolution to receive them. Men never listen so readily as when we speak to them out of their own experience, and hence the Tea Table suggests that nearly all people have them and are curious to hear them explained. They are, in fact, the entering wedge of occultism ; any one may prove a karmic revelation. JULIUS.

THEOSOPHICAL ACTIVITIES.

AMERICA.

VARUNA THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.—This is a new Branch just formed at Bridgeport, Conn. The application came in and the charter was granted since the April Convention at Chicago. The President is Dr. Emil Kirchgessner, and the Secretary Mrs. Ida J. Wilkins.

THE WILKESBARRE LETTERS ON THEOSOPHY are being circulated freely, and, as they present the subject in a very clear manner, they will do good.

THE ARYAN T. S. of New York has its meetings each week always well attended. The average attendance is over 30. The Library grows steadily, yet donations of good books are always welcomed. The new Connecticut Branch is an offshoot of this one.

A member of the Los Angeles T. S., Miss Off, has a short paper giving an outline of Theosophy, in *The Golden Era*, a magazine of San Diego, Cal.

THE INTEREST in the Society's work is shown by the fact, reported by the General Secretary, that persons from almost all parts of the United States are entering it almost every day.

REPORT OF THE CONVENTION of the American Section, printed by order of the Convention, has been sent to each member of the Society in this country and to many in foreign countries. The expense of this pamphlet covering 55 pages was met by private subscription.

FRANCE.

THE EPITOME OF THEOSOPHY, issued by Aryan T. S. members, has been translated in French by the Editor of *Le Lotus*, and separately printed, presumably for distribution.

THE SOCIETÉ MAGNÉTIQUE DE FRANCE has just been constituted, at Paris—5 Boulevard du Temple. Among its members are many theosophists, including H. P. Blavatsky and Prof. Crookes.

INDIA.

BELLARY.—In addition to the Sanscrit Free School and Moral Class, a new department called Bhagavad Branch has been opened, at which on Sundays readings and explanations of the Bhagavad-Gita are had.

CEYLON.—In January a party of theosophists visited the famous town of Panadure by invitation of the inhabitants. Mr. Leadbeater, the leading theosophist, advised the establishment of a Sunday School, which was effected. The *Buddhist Catechism* by Col. Olcott has just been published in Burmese.

COL. OLCOTT'S health has improved greatly since his return to Madras from his long tour.

ADDITIONAL SECRETARY.—The Countess Wachtmeister of Lands-Krona, Sweden, has been appointed an additional Secretary of the T. S., by the General Council, on request from the London Lodge T. S.

He who wishes to be established in Buddhahood and aspires to the knowledge of the self-born, must honor those who keep this doctrine.—*Saddharma-Pundarika,*

OM.